

Board of Trustees Charge to the Academic Portfolio Creative Team and Engaged Student Experience Creative Team

This memo follows the April 26 Board of Trustees Resolution endorsing a “strategic direction to reimagine residential undergraduate education” at Mary Baldwin University. Drawing upon the collaborative work with EY-Parthenon, the Board of Trustees challenges the institution to establish a new undergraduate curriculum while building a comprehensive structure of engaged student learning and support. True to Mary Baldwin University’s stated mission to prepare students to lead lives of purpose and professional success in a changing world, this reimagined portfolio of curricular and experiential encounters centers the student experience in the liberal arts core while equipping them with career-ready skills and industry-recognized credentials.

The Board of Trustees charges two creative teams composed of faculty, staff, administrators, and board members to draw upon both internal and external expertise to fulfill two linked strategies called for by the April 26 resolution. Creative teams will be reviewing pertinent research and literature on best practices, engaging leaders on relevant trends in higher education, and testing ideas with students, corporate leaders, and donors throughout the process.

Charge to the Academic Portfolio Creative Team

Grounded by the April 26 resolution, the **Academic Portfolio** creative team is charged to:

Establish a new academic portfolio that includes innovative components and pedagogies leading to the baccalaureate degree; a compelling liberal arts core, professional certifications, and skill-based outcomes; and a concentrated, focused core of academic majors aligned with evolving market trends to prepare students for the new economy and professional success throughout their career.

Led by the Vice President and Dean of the Gold College of Arts and Sciences, the Academic Portfolio creative team will be governed by the following goal: Design an undergraduate curriculum undergirded by core competencies (e.g., quantitative reasoning, scientific and philosophical inquiry, intercultural literacy, etc.) and buttressed by future-ready skills (e.g., critical thinking, teamwork, research, information arts, creativity, digital and multimedia expression, innovation, etc.). The curriculum will position Mary Baldwin students for professional success while achieving the Board of Trustees mandate that the undergraduate residential segment contribute positively to annual net revenue within the next 3–5 years.

The undergraduate curriculum will consist of 120 credits comprised of four components (numbers are approximate):

- **30 s.h.** of a liberal-arts core, comprised of bespoke courses featuring innovative

pedagogy and skill-based outcomes

- Total number of courses not to exceed 10
- 50 s.h. in a major with demonstrable market salience delivered largely online
 - Total number of majors not to exceed 20
- 20 s.h. of experiential learning (micro-internships/internships/co-operative experiences)
 - Experiential learning opportunities developed in tandem with the Engaged Student Experience creative team
- 20 s.h. of electives leading to a minor or professional certification
 - Courses will produce industry-recognized credentials, including certificates and certifications.

TIMELINE: June 1 – October 19–20

On June 1, the Academic Portfolio team will open a formal period of “[e]arly, careful, and genuine consultation” with the faculty toward the establishment of a new general education core and areas of academic emphasis, including the reduction of the total number of existing majors (Mary Baldwin University Faculty Handbook, 5.3.3.2). The comprehensive new curriculum will be presented in its entirety to the Board of Trustees at the Oct. 19–20, 2023 meeting. Critical intervallic dates follow:

- **July 20–21:** The Academic Portfolio team will present for Board consideration at their July meeting a new general education core curriculum consisting of no more than 10 courses with an articulated staffing plan and preliminary instructional cost analysis.
- **August 31:** The Academic Portfolio team will present for Board consideration a preliminary list of concentrated academic emphases, including consolidated, reconceptualized, and discontinued current majors. Areas of academic emphasis will be evaluated according to external market research, internal enrollment and graduation data, and areas of existing strength in the undergraduate portfolio (determined by enrollment data, existing partnerships, and undergraduate areas with paths to MBU graduate programs).

Internal data will include but not be limited to:

1. Graduates by year from Academic Year 2015–16 through 2021–22
 2. Total Number of Credits Enrolled by Majors for FY22
 3. Faculty Cost by Program FY22
 4. Course Capacity Analysis for 2019–21
 5. Course Enrollments under 8 for 2019–22
- **October 19–20:** The Academic Portfolio team will present the newly established

undergraduate academic portfolio for Board of Trustees approval.

Charge to the Engaged Student Experience Creative Team

As outlined in the April 26 resolution, the **Engaged Student Experience** creative team is charged to:

Establish an immersive learning and co-curricular experience that provides intentional elements of life design and career readiness while fostering well-being, purpose, connections, and belonging that prepares our students to be inclusive leaders who change the world. This highly engaged and experiential approach to learning will provide a supportive scaffolding engineered to progress students through an experience that begins residentially and eventually leads beyond the walls of our campus where upper-level students are immersed in semester-long significant career opportunities through internships and cooperative learning. These transformative study-away experiences will continue to build life skills both necessary at work and in life. Students will find placements for experiential learning and continue to be part of an intentional Mary Baldwin community that grows with them as they reach their first destination and mature into young professionals.

The team will provide a series of recommendations on the **core experience, institutional services, and engaged and experiential learning strategy** necessary to achieve these outcomes.

The team will be governed by the following goal of designing a highly engaged, experiential and immersive college to career experience that:

- Connects students to mentoring, community experiences, power skills, and opportunities to develop their purpose
- Provides a personalized, supportive, and comprehensive environment that nurtures students in their early exploration, and
- Fosters progressive growth toward a professional first destination.

This work will culminate in a **road map** of experiences, a comprehensive **five-year implementation plan**, and will be accompanied by a **proposed operating budget** with **multi-year personnel needs**, as well as **infrastructure recommendations and timeline**.

The overall experience, while flexible, will approximate for most students the following student journey:

A highly personalized and immersive residential experience at Mary Baldwin's historic main campus in Staunton, Va., followed by workforce preparation through internship and cooperative learning placements. Designed with flexibility in mind, students will have the opportunity to take their

learning with them wherever they go, engaging in innovative programs delivered online and designed to provide students with real-world skills they can apply during their internships, while studying remotely, or abroad.

Outcomes:

- Develop the life design journey for students that includes development of next generation skills needed for the future, including: critical thinking, adaptability, communication, cultural understanding, decision making based on data, and collaboration.
- Design a for-credit model for service/civic engagement, leadership, internships, and cooperative experiences.
- Create a service roadmap that provides a comprehensive plan for services needed for students on-campus or learning remotely.
- Grow both the capacity and capabilities of online experiential learning at MBU. ● Imagine a McCree Center for Life Success that intentionally connects faculty and workforce in systematic ways that supports the student journey and participation in experiential opportunities. Propose an integrative four-year continuum of progressively complex experiential learning opportunities that begins with service/civic engagement in the first year and progresses to micro-internships designed to model the real world, culminating in one or more meaningful internships or cooperative learning experiences.

To execute its charge this team will constitute representation from academic affairs, student engagement, and the new McCree Center to academic advisors and career coaches and the student success services, as well as all auxiliaries such as residential life, mental health, disability, intramural activities, diversity and inclusion services, club representation, facilities, etc., acknowledging a fundamental need to establish both a plan and a platform for success both on the Staunton campus as well as an enhanced network of integrated services that will serve as well as support our students while they engage in workforce opportunities throughout the region and beyond.

TIMELINE: June 1 – October 19–20

On June 1, the team will begin its formal charge and be led by the Senior Vice President and Dean of the Palmer College of Professional Studies, and consist of the Vice President for Student Engagement, the Assistant Vice President of Learning Experience, the Chief Diversity Officer, the Commandant of Cadets/Senior Advisor to the President, and the Executive Director of the McCree Center for Life Success. During the first week of June the team will identify several informal members to join its initial planning period.

- **June 15–July 19:** The team will engage in an initial period of planning intended to produce a preliminary scaffold of the **core experience**, an inventory of planned and existing **institutional services**, and an explanation of an **engaged and experiential learning**

strategy.

- **July 20–21:** The team will present to the Board of Trustees a series of recommendations on the preliminary scaffold for the **core experience**, an inventory of planned and existing **institutional services**, and an explanation of an **engaged and experiential learning strategy**. The team will then seek Board of Trustees endorsement on a plan to organize into a series of three major subcommittees, bringing in representation for each affected area of the university, and identifying a lead for each of the subcommittees.
- **July 24–October 1:** The subcommittees will work on a series of recommendations for each of the areas: **core experience**, **institutional services**, and the **engaged and experiential learning strategy**. The work of the subcommittees will be cross-institutional, intentional, and highly-collaborative. These ideas will be evaluated and engineered into the **roadmap** and **five-year implementation plan** by the full team. Over this period a clear student journey will emerge, providing a full understanding of critical touch points as well as the various barriers they will encounter or will need to be removed by the university, or that the university will need to overcome itself to provide this new experience.
- **October 2–18:** The team will synthesize the work of the subcommittees into a final report based on their recommendations and present to the Board: included will be a **road map** and **five-year implementation plan**, a **proposed operating budget** with **multi-year personnel needs**, **infrastructure recommendations** and a **timeline**.
- **October 19–20:** The team will present for Board consideration the final recommendations of the steering committee, seeking Board endorsement to initiate the **road map** and **five-year implementation plan**.